

PROGRAM ON A PAGE (or two)

SOMEONE WE SHOULD KNOW: ALICE PAUL: 19TH AMENDMENT & EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

- The architect of some of the most outstanding political achievements on behalf of women in the 20th Century...Alice Paul...was born January 11, 1885 to Quaker parents.
- As Hicksite Quakers, Alice's parents raised her with a belief in gender equality and the need to work for the betterment of society. Hicksite Friends endorsed the concept of gender equality as a central tenet of their religion and a societal norm of Quaker life. Alice's faith not only established the foundation for her belief in equality but also provided a rich legacy of activism and service to country.
- Alice's grandfather, Judge William Parry, was a cofounder of Swarthmore College in 1864 based on his belief in the idea that men and women should receive an equal, Quaker-inspired education. Alice's mother as well as her brothers and sisters attended Swarthmore. Alice graduated with a Bachelors degree in Biology in 1905.
- After receiving her Masters degree in Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania in 1907 and working in the settlement movement in New York, Alice moved to Birmingham, England to study social work at the Woodbrooke Settlement.
- It was in England where Alice Paul was exposed to a more militant women's suffrage movement from England's most radical suffragette, Emmeline Pankhurst, whose motto was, "Deeds not words." Their deeds included heckling, window smashing and rock throwing to raise public awareness about the suffrage issue. Alice Paul was arrested and imprisoned and protested with hunger strikes. She took strength from a quotation she often saw etched into the prison walls: "Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God." First expressed by Thomas Jefferson and later adopted by Susan B. Anthony, this motto helped inspire a new generation of revolutionaries in their quest for liberty.
- Upon her return to America in 1910 she said: "The militant policy is bringing success...the agitation has brought England out of her lethargy and women of England are now talking of the time when they will vote, instead of the time when their children would vote..."
- Paul returned to the University of Pennsylvania to receive her Ph.D. in Economics, and it was there she joined the National American Women's Suffrage Association. Although sharing the same goal of universal suffrage, Alice Paul and the NAWSA President Carrie Chapman Catt did not share political strategies to attain that goal. Catt believed they should concentrate their efforts on the states whereas Paul wanted to focus all energy and funding on a national amendment.
- In 1913 Paul and her followers staged an elaborate and massive parade of women marching up Pennsylvania Avenue to coincide with Woodrow Wilson's presidential inauguration. The suffragists were attacked, first with insults and then with physical violence while the police stood by and watched. They made headlines across the nation and suffrage became a popular topic.

- In 1916 the suffragists began picketing the White House and when World War I broke out, they continued to picket. They were arrested and thrown in jail. It was while they were in jail, suffering incredible brutality including being force fed, that word began leaking out to the newspapers. When news of the prison conditions and hunger strikes became known, public outcry demanded their release. Sympathy brought many to support the cause of women's suffrage.
- In 1917 in response to the public outcry, President Wilson reversed his position and announced his support for a suffrage amendment. The House and Senate passed the 19th amendment in 1919 and the battle for state ratification commenced. In 1920 a young Tennessee assemblyman was ready to cast the deciding vote negatively when he received a telegram from his mother asking him to support women's suffrage. He changed his vote and on August 18, 1920 Tennessee ratified the 19th Amendment and six days later it was certified and the 72 year battle for women's right to voted ended.
- While many suffragists left public life and activism after the 19th Amendment was enacted, Alice Paul believed the true battle for equality had yet to be won. On the 75th anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention, Paul announced she would work on a constitutional amendment which was the beginning of the Equal Rights Amendment. The ERA was introduced in every session of Congress from 1923 until it passed in 1972.
- **Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.**
- Like the 19th Amendment before it, the ERA barreled out of Congress, getting 22 of the necessary 38 state ratifications in the first year. But the pace slowed as opposition began to organize – only eight ratifications in 1973, three in 1974, one in 1975, and none in 1976.
- Arguments by ERA opponents such as Phyllis Schlafly played on the same fears that had generated female opposition to woman suffrage. Anti-ERA organizers claimed that the ERA would deny woman's right to be supported by her husband, privacy rights would be overturned, women would be sent into combat, and abortion rights and homosexual marriages would be upheld. Opponents surfaced from other traditional sectors as well. States'-rights advocates said the ERA was a federal power grab, and business interests such as the insurance industry opposed a measure they believed would cost them money. Opposition to the ERA was also organized by fundamentalist religious groups.
- Pro-ERA advocacy was led by the National Organization for Women (NOW) and ERAmerica, a coalition of nearly 80 other mainstream organizations. However, in 1977, Indiana became the 35th and so far the last state to ratify the ERA. That year also marked the death of Alice Paul, who, like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony before her, never saw the Constitution amended to include the equality of rights she had worked for all her life.
- The ERA has been and continues to be introduced into each session of Congress. The passage of the Madison Amendment, which was introduced in 1789 and passed in 1992, gives real hope that the current deadline would be thrown out and ratification in three more states would make the ERA law. As of 2007, ratification bills testing this three-state strategy have been introduced in one or more legislative sessions in eight of the 15 remaining states.
- Alice Paul worked tirelessly for the Equal Rights Amendment in the United States and for women's rights internationally. Following the passage of the 19th Amendment, Paul

earned three law degrees; she traveled to South America and Europe during the 1920's through the 1950's; she began the World Woman's Party in Switzerland which worked closely with the League of Nations for the inclusion of gender equality into the United Nations Charter and the establishment of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women; she led a coalition that was successful in adding a sexual discrimination clause to Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

- Alice Paul's life demonstrates that one person can make a difference. Her legacy lives on, bearing witness to the significance of her life and inspiring others who struggle for social justice.
- In her remarks as she introduced the Equal Rights Amendment in Seneca Falls in 1923, Alice Paul sounded a call that has great poignancy and significance over 80 years later: "If we keep on this way they will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of the 1848 Convention without being much further advanced in equal rights than we are. . . . If we had not concentrated on the Federal Amendment we should be working today for suffrage. . . . We shall not be safe until the principle of equal rights is written into the framework of our government."